

**Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation**  
**General Aquatic Resource Alteration Permit for**  
**Surveying and Geotechnical Exploration**

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**Effective Date:** April 7, 2020  
**Expiration Date:** April 7, 2025

**Activities Covered by this Permit**

This general permit authorizes scientific surveys and geotechnical exploration in streams and wetlands. Activities allowed include core sampling, seismic exploratory operations, soil surveys, soil sampling and historic resources surveys. This permit also allows the placement, operation, and removal of scientific measurement devices such as staff gages, water recording devices, water quality testing and similar structures.

Submittal of an application to the division and receipt of written authorization is not required for surveying and geotechnical exploration activities provided they are conducted in accordance with all limitations, terms and conditions contained in this permit. However notification of the commencement of activities shall be provided to the local TDEC Environmental Field Office.

Certain activities due to size, location or potential water quality impacts are not covered under this general permit, as described in both the Special and General Conditions sections. Activities not qualifying for authorization under this general permit may be authorized by a standard (individual) permit provided that all requirements of the *Tennessee Water Quality Control Act of 1977* (the Act) are met.

**Special Conditions**

1. Drilling and excavation of test wells for oil and gas exploration are not covered.
2. Long-term, or permanent alterations that result in greater than *de minimis* degradation of state waters are not authorized.
3. Temporary stream and wetland impacts, including access activities, shall conform to Tennessee Division of Forestry Best Management Practices and may not cumulatively exceed 0.10 acres of wetland or 200 linear feet of stream in magnitude of disturbance.
4. Temporary stream and wetland impacts shall be restored to pre-impact conditions. Planting and re-grading must be done within 14 business days of project completion.
5. Written notification of the intent to commence activities under this permit shall be provided to the local TDEC Environmental Field Office via email at least seven days prior, and shall include a description of the location, nature, scale, and duration of the proposed activities.

## **General Conditions**

1. The amount of fill, stream channel and bank modifications, or other impacts associated with the activity shall be limited to the minimum necessary to accomplish the project purpose. The permittee shall utilize the least impactful practicable method of construction.
2. All activities must be accomplished in conformance with the approved plans, specifications, data, and other information submitted in support of the ARAP application (form CN-1091) and the limitations, requirements, and conditions set forth herein. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this permit is a violation of the Act.
3. Activities, either individually or cumulatively, that may result in an appreciable permanent loss of resource values to streams or wetlands are not covered. This general permit shall not be used incrementally to combine with other activities resulting in a net loss of water resource values.
4. Clearing, grubbing, and other disturbance to riparian vegetation shall be kept at the minimum necessary. Unnecessary native riparian vegetation removal, including tree removal, is prohibited. Native riparian vegetation must be reestablished in all areas of disturbance outside of any permanent authorized structures after work is completed. Coverage under this permit does not serve to waive any local riparian buffer protection requirement, and permittees are responsible for obtaining any necessary local approval.
5. Widening of the stream channel as a result of this activity is prohibited.
6. This activity may not result in the permanent disruption to the movement of fish or other aquatic life upon project completion.
7. Blasting within 50 feet of any jurisdictional stream or wetland is prohibited.
8. Activities that directly impact wetlands, or impair surface water flow into or out of any wetland areas are not covered.
9. Activities occurring in known or likely habitat of state or federally listed threatened, endangered, deemed in need of management, or species of special concern may not be authorized without prior coordination with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) and TDEC Division of Natural Areas (DNA) to determine if any special conditions are required to avoid and/or minimize harm to the listed species or their habitat. Adverse effects to federally listed threatened and endangered species are not authorized by this permit. Permittee is responsible for obtaining prior authorization from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as required by Section 7 or Section 10 under the Endangered Species Act.
10. Work shall not commence until the permittee has obtained all necessary authorizations pursuant to applicable provisions of section 10 of The Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, section 404 of the Clean Water Act, section 26a of The Tennessee Valley Authority Act, section 402 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, an NPDES permit for construction stormwater), or any other federal, state or local laws.
11. Backfill activities must be accomplished in the least impactful manner possible that stabilizes the streambed and banks to prevent erosion. The completed activities may not disrupt or impound stream flow.
12. The use of monofilament-type erosion control netting or blanket is prohibited in the stream channel, stream banks, or any disturbed riparian areas within 30 feet of top of bank.
13. This permit does not authorize impacts to cultural, historic, or archaeological features or sites.
14. This permit does not authorize access to public or private property. Arrangements concerning the use of public or private property shall be made with the landowner. The permittee is responsible for

obtaining any additional permitting or maintenance agreements with other government or public agencies or lands.

15. Where practicable, all activities shall be accomplished in the dry. All surface water flowing towards this work shall be diverted using cofferdams and/or berms constructed of sandbags, clean rock (containing no fines or soils), steel sheeting, or other non-erodible, non-toxic material. All such diversion materials shall be removed upon completion of the work. Any disturbance to the stream bed or banks must be restored to its original condition. As approved after Division review, activities may be conducted in the flowing water if working in the dry will likely cause additional degradation. Any work conducted in the flowing water must be for a short duration and with minimal impact, and conform to the Division-approved methodology.
16. All activities must be carried out in such a manner as will prevent violations of water quality criteria as stated in TDEC Rule Chapter 0400-40-03, or impairment of the uses of waters of the state as designated by Rule Chapter 0400-40-04.
17. Erosion prevention and sediment control measures must be in place and functional before any earth moving operations begin, and shall be designed according to the department's Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook (<http://tnepsc.org/handbook.asp>). Permanent vegetative stabilization using native species of all disturbed areas in or near the stream channel must be initiated within 14 days of project completion (see also Landscaping with Natives at [tnepsc.org](http://tnepsc.org)). Non-native, non-invasive annuals may be used as cover crops until native species can be established.
18. Temporary stream crossings shall be limited to the minimum number necessary in the survey area and erosion control measures shall be utilized where stream bank vegetation is disturbed. Stream beds shall not be used as linear transportation routes for mechanized equipment, rather, the stream channel may be crossed perpendicularly with equipment provided no additional fill or excavation is necessary.

APPROVED:   
Jennifer Dodd  
Director, Division of Water Resources

DATE: 04/07/2020